

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

3rd Sunday of Easter

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.

“ Did not our hearts burn
within us as he talked to us
on the road and explained
the scriptures to us. ”

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

¹³ That very same day, the first day after the Sabbath, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and they were talking together about all that had happened. ¹⁵Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side ¹⁶but something prevented them from recognising him. ¹⁷He said to them, ‘What matters are you discussing as you walk along?’ They stopped short, their faces downcast. ¹⁸Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, ‘You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.’ ¹⁹‘What things?’ he asked. ‘All about Jesus of Nazareth,’ they answered, ‘who proved he was a great prophet

You are invited to read the
Gospel passage attentively,
respectfully and reverently
as a gift of God.



by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. ²¹Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. But that is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened, ²²and some women from our group have astounded us; they went to the tomb in the early morning, ²³and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us that they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. ²⁴Some of our friends went to

the tomb and found everything exactly as the women reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

²⁵Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! ²⁶Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?'

²⁷Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

²⁸When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on, ²⁹but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening, they said, 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. ³²Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us.'

³³They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven assembled together with their companions, ³⁴who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and appeared to Simon.' ³⁵Then they told their story of what happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

Reading

Dante described this story as one of the most beautiful ever written. As disciples of Jesus, the two companions on the road have had their hopes and expectations dashed by the tragic events of Good Friday. They are devastated by their loss and now bewildered

by the rumours of resurrection that are going around. As they make the sad and lonely return journey to their home in Emmaus Jesus comes and walks beside them, though they do not recognize him and consider their companion to be a stranger. Listening deeply to their story, Jesus opens up passages of scripture that throw some light on the recent events and helps them to make some sense of the Good Friday experience. While sitting at the table with them, their guest takes bread and breaks it and their eyes are opened -they recognize Jesus but he has vanished from their sight. One interpretation of this sudden disappearance could be that the risen Jesus, the Eucharistic Jesus, has now made his home within them.

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say "I recognise this passage."

v21. "our own hope had been that he was the one who would set Israel free"

From life experience can you remember a loss, failure, sickness or tragedy that killed your hopes for the future and left you languishing in fear and loneliness? At that time the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus lived again in you.

-Remember the experience of 'Jerusalem', the place where your own hope was dashed and how you walked that lonely "Emmaus road" lamenting your loss and disappointment.

-Remember the person who really listened to you 'on that road,' in your time of trouble; how that person 'walked beside you' and gave you their full attention; how they took in ev-

everything you said with care and compassion.

-Remember how, with great sensitivity and conviction, “the Jesus person” shared something of the wisdom of their own faith and life experience with you, and you began to see things a little differently.

or

-Remember the times when you accompanied someone and tended to their pain, disappointment and hurts; ‘walking beside them’, listening deeply to them; drawing on the wisdom of your own faith and life experience and gradually awakening new hope and healing in their hearts? When we accompanied people in this way the Risen Jesus lived again in us today.

v30. ‘while he was at the table with them’

Remember, perhaps, how an experience of eating and drinking together (table fellowship) strengthened the bonds of friendship and love between you.

v35. “They told their story of what happened on the road”

Remember experiences of community which gave us the opportunity to tell our stories and listen to the stories of others – a space which was mutually affirming and encouraging.

Responding

Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Heavenly Father, thank you for people of compassion who have drawn near to me in times of loss and accompanied me “on the road.” They allowed me to talk

out my pain and sorrow – “the things that have been happening these last few days.” Having first listened deeply to my story, they shared with me some of their own painful life experience in a way that helped me make some sense of, and feel less alone in, what I was going through. I have been comforted by their friendship and left with their wise words “burning within me”. In them I recognize your loving presence today. Thank you.

Heavenly Father, I ask forgiveness for the times that fear prevented me from walking beside others on their “Emmaus” road. Not knowing what to say or what to do, I chose to stay away. Yet my very presence “walking beside them” could well have brought them some comfort and strength. Lord, have mercy.

Heavenly Father, so many of the people we meet every day are walking that same road to Emmaus – “their faces downcast.” Give us the courage to “walk beside them” and offer a listening ear for however long it takes. Give us the discernment, too, to know when to speak, if at all, and what to say. And if they press us “to stay with them” and offer us hospitality let us be generous in receiving their gift. So often it is at the dining tables of our homes that hearts are healed and “eyes are opened”.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God’s presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**Did not our hearts burn within us.**”

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what

new insight has been given to you into the meaning of... hope or trust or friendship or resurrection.

True friends are those who walk with us on the painful journeys of life.



Reading

The two disciples are on their way out of Jerusalem with their hearts broken by the death of Jesus because they had placed all their hope in him. Jesus appears alongside them but their sadness stops them from recognizing him. The Risen Jesus slowly opens their eyes to recognize him and heals their burning hearts with hope.

Recognising

Can you remember a time when your heart was broken by an event such as the sickness or death of a family member, or an experience of feeling let down by a friend?

Can you remember meeting a "Jesus person", maybe a parent or teacher who listened to you in a time of need, encouraged you and opened the eyes of your heart to look forward with hope?

Responding

Father, I thank you for the "Jesus people"

who have listened to me with love, encouraged me with enthusiasm and helped me to be hopeful.

Father, I am sorry for the times that, like the disciples, I lost hope in you and was blind to your presence in my life.

Father, I ask that I may be filled with new hope, like the disciples, so that I may listen and encourage others with a loving heart and open their eyes to look forward with hope.

Resting

Rest in the loving embrace of the Father by repeating "open my eyes" for as long as it is possible. May your heart be filled with hope as you are drawn deeper into the Father's presence.

Reflecting

Hope is an eye-opening experience which sets the heart on fire with love.

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.